

The Print Club of New York, Inc.

P.O. Box 4477 Grand Central Station • New York, N.Y. 10163 ** 212-479-7915

Latest News

Spring 1995

President's Greeting

I want to wish all Print Club members a very happy new year and to report that the club continues to have many exciting educational functions planned for the coming year. We again would hope that a larger number of our membership would take advantage of these events. Recently, Roz Weinstein, our very active and effective Events Committee chairperson, mailed out a schedule of forthcoming events and it is our hope that each one of you finds several of special interest to attend.

The club membership was rapidly filled. last year We now have a waiting list for the coming year, which starts for us in June 1995, with the distribution of a recently commissioned etching by April Gornik. The exceptionally high quality of the Print Club of New York's selections continues. Proof of this is the fact that the three previous prints have been accepted by several major museums including the MOMA and the Whitney, as well as the Fogg Museum.

Once again, I would encourage each member to become more involved in our club. We need people interested in writing, editorial work and participation in any of our active committees. In an attempt to better utilize members' talents and to be responsive to their needs, Glen Nelson has compiled a form for our new members that asks them to detail their specific interests.

We hope to establish a place that we can call our own a place where committees can meet and members can relax and read current journals and literature pertaining to prints. Recently, I enjoyed reading a book by Clinton Adams entitled *American Lithographers 1900-1960*, printed by the New Mexico University Press. I recommend it highly for entertaining reading.

I end this note with one request: please participate.

Julian Hyman

Club Enjoys Educational Program on Conservation

Thanks again to Roz Weinstein and the Events Committee for a marvelous evening at the Duke Mansion on East 78th Street. It was an important and essential learning experience for anyone interested in the conservation and restoration of works on paper.

Professor Margaret Holben-Ellis, Chairman of the N.Y.U. Graduate Department of Conservation and consultant at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gave us a lively slide lecture and distributed helpful literature. Among other things, she pointed out that acid mats and tapes, ultraviolet light and extreme temperature changes are the most damaging. Many of us wished we had learned these basic rules before we hung our precious prints.

After the question-and-answer period, we had wine and cheese in the magnificent library. We are sorry that more members were not able to enjoy this program which was not available to the general public.

Information on print conservation and proper framing techniques is available from the AIC/FAIC, located at 1717 K Street, N.W., Suite 301, Washington, D.C., and the Conservation Center, Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, 14 East 78th Street, NY, NY 10021.

The Print Club of New York is dedicated to the concept of expanding the knowledge and experience of print lovers as well as expanding their expertise. We hope to see many more of our members at the programs listed in our bulletin for 1995

The Print Market: A Brief History

Financial markets have their ups and downs and sometimes the print market follows a similar pattern. Old Master print prices, for example, rise and fall to a lesser degree than other fields. On the other hand, twentieth-century prints that were once snapped up by eager collectors may now languish in attics and dealers' bins. In the 1920s, American etchers were happy to get ten or fifteen dollars, while English printmakers sold their work for much higher prices. A choice Muirhead Bone or James McBey could bring a few thousand dollars. After 1940, Picasso and French Impressionist prints began to rise in value.

American prints offered in the mid-1940s were available at prices that seem incredible to young collectors involved in the present market. (Who would believe Winslow Homer and Edward Hopper selling for \$15 to \$25?) Members of a print club paid \$10 for the Martin Lewis print *Chance Meeting* in 1941. The same print might bring \$2,000 in 1980, yet your profit would look meager in 1994. A major Lewis, *Glow of the City*, recently brought \$20,000 at auction. Another example of profit increase might be George Bellows famous fight scene, *Stag at Sharkey's*, which brought \$450 in the 1940s and now adds a few zeros to sell for \$45,000 at auction.

The economy alone can effect the stock and bond market, but the print collector must also consider changing tastes, social values, rarity and condition when making a choice of images. The most popular subjects at the turn of the century were churches, Italian hill towns or bucolic scenes. American printmakers came to Europe in the footsteps of the expatriate James Whistler. His influence was enormous and there was a strong international outlook following the famous Armory show of 1913.

During the '30s and '40s the WPA designed the \$5 print to bring American prints to a public unable to afford much more. Robert Henri was a charismatic teacher who influenced a group of artists to look at everyday life. One of the eight members of the "Ashcan School", John Sloan did a series of outstanding etchings of New York City. The buildings, the Bowery, Coney Island and the poor became subjects for Reginald Marsh, Louis Lozowick, Glen Coleman and many other fine printers. A few turned back to the farms, the trains that criss-crossed America, the traveling circus and the South. The three most renowned "Regionalists" were John Stuart Curry, Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton. Prints by Benton and Wood consistently bring \$4,000 to \$5,000 at auction.

After World War II, this trend reversed and the Surrealists, who fled Europe, provided a catalyst for a new wave of modernist art and abstraction. In the 1970s, prices for Chagall, Picasso, Matisse, Renoir and their equals began a meteoric rise.

Among Americans, prints by Hopper and Homer seem to keep pace with prices generated by the contemporaries like Jasper Johns, Frank Stella and others. The costs of producing some of these new mixed media prints of enormous size also raised the prices. The early '90s retrenched from some of the highs of just ten years ago, but exceptional prints can still reach over \$100,000. The collectors today know that condition, edition size and talent, whether realist or abstract, will make their choice special no matter the current value. *Elaine Hyman*

Some material excerpted from writings of Albert Reese

Dorothy Schneiderman Appreciated

The Officers and Board of Directors of The Print Club of New York want to express their appreciation for the outstanding contribution of Dorothy Schneiderman and her Harbor Gallery in the history of founding the Print Club. By telling so many print collectors about the club during its fragile formative period, she helped many of us, who would have had no other way to become acquainted, to meet each other. She has been a great source of inspiration and guidance. All of us have a fond feeling of appreciation for Dorothy and our friendships with her. Unfortunately, due to her stroke last year, she has had to remain in a convalescent home where, nevertheless, she is surviving reasonably well.

The paragraph telling of Dorothy's contribution was inadvertently omitted from the history of the club in the November/December newsletter.

Upcoming Club Events

March 21, 6:30 pm

ARTIST LECTURE: Claire Romano and John Ross at The National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South, NY, NY

May 21, 1:30 pm

MUSEUM TOUR & LECTURE: Trudy Hansen at the Zimmerli Galleries, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

Alois Senefelder and the Invention of Lithography

By Marilyn Kushner

Alois Senefelder ranks as one of the most important people in the history of printmaking because he was the inventor of lithography. By doing so, he revolutionized not only the methods of aesthetic "picture making" but also of inexpensive reproduction which, in turn, affected nineteenth-century commerce, advertising and the news media.

Senefelder, whose father was a performer in the Theater Royal in Munich, was born in Prague in 1771. The young boy studied law but remained interested in his father's pursuits and wrote a small play while still in his teens. Upon his father's death, Senefelder could no longer remain in law school and sought ways in which he could print and distribute his own writings in order to earn a meager living.

Unable to afford the services of a commercial printing concern, Senefelder began to experiment in methods of printing and reproduction on his own. He worked with a number of engraving methods but eventually his attentions were turned to a stone which he had recently purchased for the purpose of grinding his colors. Once Senefelder realized that he could obtain a stone that would withstand the pressures of a printing press and also that he might polish that stone so that it would receive printer's ink, he began to explore the possibilities of using the stone as a matrix rather than the metal plates which had been the chosen method of reproduction for hundreds of years.

One defeat followed another until, by chance, Senefelder's mother asked him to write her a bill for the washer woman who was waiting for linen. Not having any paper at hand, he quickly wrote the list with his prepared ink on a stone that he had just polished, planning to copy it later onto paper, at his leisure. In his words, "Sometime after this I was just hoping to wipe this writing from the stone, when the idea all at once struck me, to try what would be the effect of such a writing with my prepared ink, if I were to bite in the stone with aqua-fortis; and whether, perhaps, it might not be possible to apply printing ink to it, in the same way as to wood engravings, and so take impressions from it." Thus, after much trial and error, the new art of chemical printing, as Senefelder called it, was invented (in 1796).

Successive refinements followed and soon Senefelder was printing musical compositions for publishers in Austria. As Senefelder continued to experiment with methods never earning very much money for his invention), artistic

possibilities of the new medium were quickly recognized and by the first few years of the nineteenth century there were people working in lithography in Austria, England and France.

By 1816 Godefroy Engelmann and Charles de Lasteyrie began commissioning artists such as Carle and Horace Vernet and Baron Gros to produce lithographs for them in the small shop they had established in Paris. This set the stage for the explosion of popularity that lithography would enjoy in subsequent centuries, a medium that is evolving still today but one which remains true to the principles that guided it in the early years of its inception in the late eighteenth century.

Marilyn Kushner is Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Brooklyn Museum

Yvonne Jacquette Sheds Light on Her Aerial Artistry

Despite a major snowstorm, many PCNY members braved the elements to hear Yvonne Jacquette review her career in art and fine printmaking at the Brooke Alexander Gallery on February 4th.

She discussed the evolution of her art and told how she became interested in working from skyscrapers and airplanes to create her exciting aerial landscapes and nightscapes. Yvonne illustrated her talk by showing a range of prints and illustrated books that supplemented the beautiful paintings in her new show at the gallery. Questions from the audience prompted her to go into more detail and also discuss her plans for a new series of prints in other media.

In introducing the artist, Carolyn Alexander told of their long association, stating that Yvonne was the first artist they invited to exhibit paintings as well as prints in their new larger gallery. Yvonne later told of the many things that Brooke had done to help artists during the printmaking process, such as trying different types of papers and printing techniques. (Brooke and Carolyn were honored with an exhibition of their history of print publishing at the Museum of Modern Art last year).

All of the PCNY members who were able to attend felt privileged to be invited to the gallery and to learn so much from the artist herself. We thank you again--Yvonne Jacquette, Carolyn and Brooke Alexander.

Your Invitation to New Art-on-Paper Show

A new show with some 40 dealers featuring the full range of art on paper, including fine prints, watercolors, photography and fine books will be held at Metropolitan Antiques, 110 West 19th Street, New York City, from Friday through Sunday, April 28 to 30.

This notice will admit members of The Print Club of New York to the special preview on Friday, 6-9pm for only \$5 instead of \$15. The next two days, 11am to 5pm (10am to 6pm on Saturday), admission is only \$5 a day.

Metropolitan Antiques has become known as a center for specialty shows, and the group sponsoring this first *Art on Paper/New York* show promises an interesting range of dealers and works of art for purchase by attendees. Some of the dealers have not shown in New York before. For more information, call (212) 463-0200.

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Other Events

The 13th annual Washington International Print Fair will feature 28 art dealers offering works ranging in price between \$30 and \$30,000. It will be held April 1 and 2 at Rosslyn Westpark Hotel, 1900 North Fort Myer Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

Prints For Sale

The Club offers a classified ads service. For information about the prints listed, call the sellers directly. Their phone numbers appear below. To place an ad in the next newsletter for a nominal fee, call Glen Nelson at 201-938-3565.

Note that the Print Club of New York has a phone hotline to meet the needs of its members. Information about programs, activities and how to volunteer for committees, etc. is now available. The number is: (212) 479-7915

